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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# BAM!

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## Director's Corner

This will be my last letter for BAM. I am moving on to Tanzania as Mission Director on April 12<sup>th</sup>. My four years in Mali have been a fabulous experience, I wouldn't change one day. Perhaps more importantly, USAID has really and truly had a tremendous impact during those four years. On a recent trip to the north of the country, I was so excited to see triple the number of girls in primary school thanks to our Ambassador's Scholarship program. Also in USAID targeted areas, the number of elected women leaders has increased 200 percent over the last two years. The rate of vaccination for young children has gone from 32% to 76% over the last four years – quite an improvement! The number of women with access to finance has tripled due to USAID interventions. In the past year we built a million dollar canal that will improve the lives of 20,000 Malians. And this is just the tip of our accomplishments.

I have had the great opportunity to work side by side with the Ministers of Health, Education, Agriculture, Environment, Communications, and Commerce. The First Lady of Mali has been an active advocate of USAID programs and has

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**CHALLENGE OF PARTNERSHIP** — *MCC CEO, Paul Applegarth, 4th from right, stands next to Mission Director, Pam White and Mali's Investments Promotion Minister, Ousmane Thiam to her right and other government officials during a ceremony held to inaugurate an irrigation canal in the Ségou region.*

## MCC Chief Executive Officer Visited Mali

*Learning about Mali and discussing the draft proposal*

**BAMAKO, Mali** — Last November Paul Applegarth, CEO of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) visited Mali, to learn about the country, discuss the draft Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) proposal prepared by Mali's technical team, and visit some of the proposed project sites. Applegarth was accompanied by John Hewko, Vice President of Country Relations, Maureen Harrington, Senior Advisor to the CEO, and Mary Swann, Director of Communications. The MCC delegation toured the freight terminal at Bamako-Senou International Airport, as well as part of the agricultural zone, the *Office du Niger*, north of Ségou.

The main foci of the Malian proposal to the MCC are the creation of an agro-industry node in the Office du Niger and modernization of Bamako's international airport to facilitate trade and promote value added processing of Malian products. According to Madani Touré, the leader of the technical team, the two projects will allow Mali to capitalize on the unique potential for agricultural production in the *Office du Niger*, located to the north and east of Ségou, and to facilitate trade and transport of the resulting production, in addition to the existing production of fruit, vegetables, fish, and meat. These two projects are designed to be interrelated so as to build on each other's capacity for poverty reduction.

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## USAID/Mali supports production of clean, green and safe food: First stone laid for the expansion of Mali's Environmental Quality Laboratory

**BAMAKO, Mali** — On Wednesday, 24 November, USAID/Mali Mission Director, Pamela White, along with Mali's Minister of Livestock and Fisheries, Oumar Ibrahima Touré and Minister of Industry and Commerce, Choguel Kollalla Maïga, laid the first stone for the construction of an Environmental Quality Laboratory at the campus of the Central Veterinary Laboratory, Bamako. USAID contributed about \$250,000 for this construction of additional laboratory capacity expanding the original laboratory constructed in 1994 with about \$600,000 support from USAID.

During the ground breaking ceremony, Ms. White stressed the importance of producing healthy and environmentally safe food products more so in the present day global village context. This national reference laboratory will play a major role in ensuring agricultural products entering the food chain, either through domestic or through export markets, will be free from pesticides and other toxic residues. It is expected that the laboratory will become a regional reference laboratory for residue and toxic chemical analy-

ses, an important service activity to penetrate and secure export markets for the region's agricultural products. Several international agencies such as Food and Agricultural Organization and USAID's Collaborative Research Support Programs (CRSP) are now considering providing additional equipment and human resources development support to this reference laboratory. Ms. White stated that by supporting the construction of this new facility, USAID will be pleased to partner with Mali in assuring the production of "clean, green and safe food" for both domestic and international markets.

During the ceremony, it was also noted that this laboratory will act as a crosscutting facility serving the needs of many sectors such as agriculture, health, commerce, environment and education and play an important role in addressing biosafety concerns emanating from modern cutting edge technologies such as bio-



Photo: Sana Guindo

**STONE LAYING**—USAID Mission Director and Mali's Livestock Minister (left) and Trade Minister laying first stone of the EQL, Sotuba.

technology.

After four months of intensive labor, the completed new modern laboratory was inaugurated on April 11, 2005 and named after the late Mady Cheich Dramé USAID Mali's livestock officer who passed away in December 2004.— **R. Shetty, USAID.**

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spoken publicly on our behalf. The Presi-

dedicated public servants.

Photo: I. Litny, USAID



**TUAREG AMAZON**—Pam, dressed in traditional northern garments, is riding a horse in Temera, Mali.

are rich in some many (more important) ways. They have a rich culture and a rich history. They have a democratic government and tolerant religious leaders. They are some of the warmest, most friendly people on earth. They share whatever they have with delight. In my opinion these qualities earn them the right to call themselves wealthy.

And I have greatly benefited by having the opportunity to serve in this fascinating country. I have ridden on camels in the vast Sahara desert at sundown which is one of the most beautiful sights on earth. I have eaten with poor villagers who shared their small chicken with me by the side of a friendly fire. It was the best meal I ever had. I have made a difference in women's and girls' lives here — they come out in huge numbers to greet me wherever I go. There is no better feeling than to believe you have had an impact on people's lives.

And so I leave Mali with some sadness and regret but for certain much richer.

**Pamela White**

dent has also been a good friend to USAID and the USG and often publicly praises our interventions. What a delight it has been to be able to work with these

Mali is often described as one of the poorest nations on earth, but I get a little sick of hearing that. It is true that Malians do not have a lot of money but they



## **“Just Say No to Corruption”: A Story on Malians’ Participation in Local Governance: Participatory municipal self-analysis leads to tax compliance – and citizen anti-corruption movements!**



**KOLOKANI, Mali** — Women and men gathered to share views on corruption.

Across Mali citizens and leaders of municipalities are analyzing the state of local government in their community – and demanding transparent budget management! In 73 municipalities more than 4,000 key stakeholders discussed the state of local governance. Participants included mayors and elected officials, village chiefs and traditional authorities, administrators, technical services, religious leaders, representatives of women’s associations, parents’ associations, chambers of agriculture, health management committees, youth groups, butchers, herders, and local NGOs. Across the country Malian citizens demanded transparent and honest government from their elected leaders. They identified local governance problems – and found solutions.

In Ber, north of Timbuktu, the incoming mayor discovered that the treasury was nearly empty and that communal personnel

had not been paid in two months. He immediately informed the population via radio and initiated a tax collection drive. Resources were raised tenfold and back salaries paid. But the population drove a careful bargain: “We will help you to raise this revenue, but we will also seize every opportunity to remind you that we expect you to listen to us as decisions are made on where and how to invest our scarce resources!”

Tiakadougou Dialakoro in the region of Koulikoro saw a spectacular drop in tax payment rates over the last three years – from 92% in 2001 to 38% in 2002 and 0.2% in 2003. During the diagnostic participants explained that the mayor’s office and a community health center had been constructed, but no accounting of expenditures had been made to the population. Residents made a decision to sanction an uncommunicative municipal council, fearing that funds had been embezzled. Citizens want accountability. Indeed – in Tiakadougou Dialakoro – they demand it!

When Commune VI in Bamako conducted a diagnostic of strengths and weaknesses in local governance, tax-paying citizens spoke out. The ensuing discussion and examination of management controls led to the discovery of multiple accounting ledgers and systematic embezzlement. Four municipal officials involved in the scam were arrested and admitted their guilt, two more are being investigated. Research is ongoing to determine the exact amount that was embezzled, but new staff collected, in two weeks, the equivalent of six months of revenues reported by previous personnel. Citizens, who refused to participate in commune governance in the past, are now engaged and enthusiastic about the future of their municipality. —**Hannah Baldwin, USAID.**

## **Trade Integrated Framework: Implementation Follow-up Workshop in Bamako** *Concrete actions identified to boost Mali’s trade*

**BAMAKO, Mali** — After a long period of “inertia” for various reasons before the holding of sectoral workshops in July 2004, the Integrated Framework (IF) process in Mali is now in high gear. The National Validation Workshop was held on November 29 through December 1, 2004. It was a success in terms of the quality of participation, the results achieved, and the ownership by Malian authorities. Participation of in-country donors (both bilateral and multilateral agencies) and multilateral organizations (World Bank, WTO, UNCTAD, ITC, and UNDP) was effective. The first day was devoted to plenary presentations on the IF process worldwide and thematic and general presentations on the Malian diagnostic study (DTIS) followed by a question and answer session. The second day was devoted to group work. Both the plenary and working group sessions were presided over by Ministerial department staff. The third day was devoted first to plenary presentation of recommendations and conclusions from the working groups, and to the closing session of the workshop.

tainly the most innovative one) was the meeting that followed the closing session, which included specifically all the donors and senior officers of the Malian administration. Indeed, a quick meeting was organized after the closing of the workshop to capitalize on the presence of many bilateral and multilateral donors and let them talk about their experience regarding the IF process and their views on the special case of Mali. This was a very useful exchange session, highly appreciated by donors, and it gave the Malian authorities the opportunity to discuss the next steps and set a reasonable implementation agenda for the IF process. During this meeting, it was decided that the process be accelerated to be able to benefit from the Window II funding intended for priority projects during the phase between the completion of the DTIS and accessing funding through Round Tables, program support, etc. Managed by UNDP, the Window II funds are expected to reach \$1 million in the case of Mali, should there be no major delays in the process, according to the UNDP representative.

One of the key events of this Validation Workshop (and cer-

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## Catholic Relief Service and AFRICARE Care for Women and Children in Burkina

*PVOs make a difference through DAPs*

**OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso** — Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and AFRICARE, two international NGOs, receive funding from USAID under the Food For Peace (FFP) Development Assistance Program (DAP). The intended objective of this program is “Improved food security of targeted rural populations in Burkina Faso and extremely vulnerable populations in urban, suburban and rural areas throughout the country.” It encompasses five strategic objectives including “Increased income from micro enterprises for rural poor women” and “Increased food availability to highly food insecure people in Burkina Faso” under which each NGO initiated activities targeting vulnerable women.

CRS helped women from the village of Kalembouly to set up a village bank known as “GNANDONOU” (SOLIDARITY in the local *Ko* language). The major activities of the village bank focus on the creation of income generating activities for its members through weaving and sales of cloth materials, small scale animal breeding, restaurant business, trade in ingredients,



Photo: A. Dicko

*Ganou Mariam, a lucky and happy beneficiary, sells ingredients in Kalembouly village market.*

locally brewed beer, cereals and other goods. From the project launch in 1999 to date, the bank claims 343 members and credit worth CFA 10,665,000. Thanks to the loans, women embarked on small scale businesses. The benefit they receive enables them to address family expenses: medical bills, children’s school fees and supplies, purchase of oxen for the men, securing food stocks for the family, payment of dowries for the brides, etc. They also carried out projects of public interest in the village. Thus, women were able to construct and equip a building for childbirth, with a hall which is used to host village meeting and training sessions. The impact of these activities is visible in the village. Moreover, both women and men admitted and confirmed the important role the project is playing in social cohesion in the village.



*Women had a birth center built from the proceeds of their petty trade.*



Photo: A. Dicko

*Child weighing exercise by AFRICARE-trained local agents...*

In the village of Kindibo on the other hand, AFRICARE supports the village Food Security Committee whose activities encompass voluntary nutrition education, farming, cattle breeding, water and sanitation. The training provided by AFRICARE and the skills gained have seriously impacted the lives of the local populations. They themselves admitted the change in their attitude and approach to cattle breeding as they shifted from an extensive cattle breeding system to an intensive one with high output; the improvement in food production, the introduction of innovative farming techniques like fixing to check land degradation and a new striga-resistant variety of millet (WANKI), better early seeds; the promotion of sesame and winter gardening. “We noted significant increases in our incomes as a result of the activities initiated under this project”, said Hali-matou, who added “very few of our men now migrate for work. We feel more secure and can take better care of our children.”



Photo: A. Dicko

*... followed with child food preparation practice in Kindibo village.*

Proceeds from these activities are used to buy and store food supplies, to pay for school fees and supplies, to settle medical bills, etc.

One of the lead and most beneficial activities of this project is without a shadow of doubt child nutrition which improves the health of children and relieves mothers from so many ordeals. Products from collective farms are used to prepare enriched porridge for children diagnosed as suffering from malnutrition during weighing exercises conducted by AFRICARE-trained local agents who monitor children’s health, provide advice and refer to appropriate health centers as needed. The population of Kindibo, women in particular, perceive AFRICARE as their saviour and feel proud of the skills they acquired through the project. They are also largely indebted to the project for serving as a social cohesion factor. — **A. Dicko, USAID.**



## The Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program Gets Started in the North of Mali

*Future women leaders get a head start*

In Mali, particularly in the North, many girls do not yet get the opportunity to go to school or once there,



*Thanks to US assistance, these girls and many others from the north of Mali can now go to school.*

find it difficult to continue their schooling to secondary level. This is largely due to their family's economic situation, nomadic life style and the traditional role of women and girls in society. To address this problem USAID/Mali, in collaboration with the State Department and Peace Corps, inaugurated the Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program funded through the President's Africa Education Initiative (AEI). The Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program, managed by USAID, works through an implementing partner World Education, the Ministry of Education and three local NGOs. The program targets 5,000 primary school girls who will receive assistance from World Education, which uses a range of strategies to help girls continue their education:

- 5,000 scholarships for girls attending 100 primary schools in the regions of Gao, Kidal and Tombouctou, which provide

funding for school fees, uniforms, books and stationery, lamps and paraffin to enable home study in the evenings.

- Scholarship girls will be given the opportunity to attend remedial classes and home study groups. Peer and family support and monitoring of their school attendance enables any problems to be noticed and quickly addressed.

- Teachers are encouraged to give more classroom attention to girls and divide classroom duties fairly and parents are made aware of the importance of supporting their daughters in school.

- Mothers' Associations play a role in the management of scholarship funds and work with school authorities and communities to encourage effective education for girls.

- Mentoring activities include the opportunity to talk to local women with notable achievements and to visit secondary schools and prepare for continued education.

- Regional girls' days raise the profile of girls' education and give encouragement to girls in school.

The Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program will enable more girls to progress from one class to the next (4<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> grades), encourage higher school attendance and contribute to an improved environment for girls' education in the North of Mali (Tombouctou, Gao, and Kidal). — **Sue Upton, World Education.**

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The validation workshop was followed by the Steering Committee (SC) meeting held on December 21, 2004. The purpose of this meeting was twofold. First, the validation of the Action Matrix by the SC members and second, the selection of a very limited number of priority actions in the validated Action Matrix intended to be funded through the Window II. Before this SC meeting, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (the ministry in charge of the Malian IF process), UNDP, USAID, and TradeMali representatives agreed on the choice of one consultant who will be in charge of translating these priority actions into concrete projects in the UN format by December 31, 2004. According to the UNDP representative, this SC meeting and the results it achieved were instrumental for initiating payment through the Window II. The following five priority actions were selected from the Action Matrix by the Steering Committee: (1) improving the availability of air cargo, (2) streamlining the use of economic regimes, (3) encouraging the usage of certification of origin, (4) improving the productivity and competitiveness of mangoes and shea nuts, and (5) strengthening the institutional capacities.

One immediate next step will concern the approval of the Action Matrix by the Monitoring Committee, which is an inter-ministerial committee presided over by the country's Prime Minister. This step will definitively mark the validation by the government of this national strategy of international trade that

will be entirely integrated into the national poverty reduction strategy, the CSLP. Another immediate step will be, according to the UNDP representative, the approval by the LPAC (Local Power Action Committee, including the World Bank, UNDP, USAID, and key Ministries like the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Planning and Territorial Development, the Ministry of Investments Promotion, and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce) of the set of priority projects derived from the priority actions selected by the SC members. These priority projects will then be transmitted to UNDP for funding through the Window II. After this, an intermediate step will consist in the transformation of the whole validated Action Matrix into executable projects. And, in the meantime, preparations for the upcoming Donors' Round Table to source funding for the whole set of projects derived from the Malian DTIS will be a great challenge in the process.

As the Donor Facilitator of the entire process in Mali, USAID (in collaboration with TradeMali) was instrumental in providing support to the IF focal point, the DNCC (*Direction Nationale du Commerce et de la Concurrence*), and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in organizing all the workshops, revising the different drafts of the DTIS, informing stakeholders on the progress level, and assisting the IF focal point in logistic issues. This collaboration was greatly appreciated by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.— **S. Keita, USAID.**

## USAID Mali's GIS Unit and State Department's HIU Join Hands

*The two USG agencies discuss GI applications*

**BAMAKO, Mali** — Early in December last year, Kathleen Miner and Tiffany Hill, who are members of the Humanitarian Information Unit (HIU) of the State Department's Bureau for Intelligence and Research, visited the USAID office in Mali and had a series of working sessions with several of the latter's partners on the important applications of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The HIU was formed just two years ago as an interagency unit charged with the mandate to serve as a focal point for USG UNCLASSIFIED information on complex emergencies, and to promote best practices for information management.

While in Bamako, Miner and Hill who are also GIS specialists, worked closely with Hendrik Baenyens, USAID Mali's GIS specialist, providing advice on the Mission's GIS applications. They gave a 2-hour presentation in the Mission's office building which was extended to partners using or planning to use GIS in their reporting mechanisms. This offered them the opportunity to share their experiences on the importance of this strategic development tool and the problems that they can ex-

pect to encounter. They also met with the US Embassy and other stakeholders to garner support for a new initiative that INR is working on called the Populations at Risk Information Project.

The HIU is spearheading the interagency effort that is designed to develop a USG capacity to prioritize, gather, estimate, and utilize "baseline" sub-national demographic and related information well in advance of a possible emergency, i.e., for both contingency planning and response purposes.

USAID/Mali was selected for the significant progress made by its GIS Unit after barely one year of operation and Mali as one the three countries where it is hoped to develop a prototype "decision support package", the others being Haiti and Mozambique.

USAID and partners were encouraged to make further use of GIS and train, where it is necessary, more staff for the proper use of all GIS-related gadgets. — **M. Doumbia, USAID**

## The 143<sup>rd</sup> Recipient of Prestigious Award is from USAID:

*"I could have done absolutely nothing without all of you"*



Photo: Sana

Pam receiving her Award from Mali's Foreign Minister, Moctar Ouane.

**BAMAKO, Mali** — USAID/Mali's outgoing Mission Director, Pam White, was awarded one of Mali's most prestigious decorations: "*Officier de l'Ordre National du Mali*" during a colorful send-off reception offered by the Malian Foreign Minister on April 7, 2005. Although it is a tradition for Mali to honor heads of Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations leaving the country on completion of their tour of duty, this was the first time in Mali's history for a USAID Mission Director to be awarded the coveted award. Foreign Minister Moctar Ouane said: "Protocol dictates us to give awards, but we're doing this one

particularly because we like you, Pam, for what USAID has achieved in Mali." He further added: "Under your leadership and thanks to your personal commitment, cooperation between USAID and Mali made giant strides over the past years."

The "*Officier de l'Ordre National du Mali*" honor was conferred to Pam White for her active leadership during her four-year tenure as Mission Director in Mali which saw USAID play an instrumental role in development sectors as a whole, but particularly with regard to poverty reduction through economic growth activities, promotion of women's condition, and girls' education in the North of Mali.

After receiving the award, the Mission Director indicated it was a recognition of the team work by USAID and the entire staff of the Mission, as she put it: "I could have done absolutely nothing without you - all of you. USAID has done well and I believe this is recognized by farmers as well as the Head of State." Pam expressed deep regret for leaving Mali, a country she described as "economically poor, but culturally rich, stable and hospitable."

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The Applegarth delegation visited Bamako's international airport, specifically its freight terminal, and the *Office du Niger*, located about 150 miles northeast of Bamako. While in the Office du Niger, the team visited the Markala Sugar Project, which is currently testing sugar cane varieties, and attended a ceremony to inaugurate a new irrigation canal, funded by USAID, which will open more land to irrigation.

In addition to technical feasibility, the MCC delegation stressed that Mali's proposal must demonstrate widespread consultation with civil society and the private sector; propose measurable results; and illustrate linkages to policy reform. In March 2005, Madagascar became the first country to sign a compact with the MCC. — **M. Farroe, USAID.**

The award was only the 143<sup>rd</sup> issued in its category to a foreigner since Mali became an independent nation in 1960, and the first ever to a USAID Director in Mali. In addition to the Foreign Minister, several Malian cabinet members who work closely with USAID, attended the ceremony along with the Palestinian Ambassador to Mali, who is the Dean of the Diplomatic Community. Congratulations Pam, a.k.a. *Coumba Sow*, for pushing the entire USAID Mission to make a difference in Mali! — **M. Doumbia, USAID.**

## Niger: Peaceful Elections Again Mark Continued Transition to Democracy

*“The benefits of these elections will be felt for generations to come”*



At a poll station in Niamey, Faatimata, 30, the mother of a 7-month old baby, gets ready to cast her vote.

**NIAMEY, Niger** — After years of military rule and unsuccessful attempts to transition to democracy, throughout the 1990s, the people of Niger again voted for peace on three separate occasions in 2004. In December 1999, Niger marked its first successful transition to democracy and elected a democratic government, which has successfully ruled the country for five years. The elections held in 2004 marked the first successful successive multi-party elections in the history of the country.

On July 24<sup>th</sup>, approximately 2,330,000 Nigeriens elected their own local lead-

ers, for the first time ever. In total, 3,747 local officials in 265 newly created communes were chosen by 43.56% of the electorate, at 14,118 polling stations. Conforming to the national quota, at least 10% of these newly elected leaders are women. Although not all communes are functional, and many do not have office buildings, local leaders are anxious to show their dedication and determination to improve the living standards of people in the second poorest country in the world. NGOs and development partners are creating training modules and organizing training programs to help newly elected local government officials, and to support the decentralization process. USAID provided support to the local elections process through the CEPPS program (Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening), and funded the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to provide training to political party electoral observers, and a “get out the vote” media campaign. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) also provided crucial support to NDI to train women political party candidates, which greatly facilitated the implementation of the gender quota. USAID-funded rural radios were also used to promote civic education and awareness during electoral campaigns.

Niger followed these successful local elections with presidential elections. On November 16<sup>th</sup>, Niger held first round presidential elections, where the incumbent, Mamadou Tandja of the MNSD political party, failed to win an outright ma-

ajority. With 40.67% of the vote, Tandja and the MNSD formed a coalition with smaller opposition parties for a presidential run-off election. On December 4<sup>th</sup>, second round presidential elections and legislative elections were held, and 44.67% of Niger’s 5,278,598 registered voters showed their commitment to democracy by taking the time to vote. The ruling party won 47 seats in the newly expanded 113-seat national assembly, and 14 women were elected to the nation’s highest legislative body. Previously, only one woman held that honor. On December 21, President Tandja renewed his commitment to lead the people of Niger out of poverty during an inaugural ceremony held at the national stadium, and his Prime Minister, Hama Amadou, was later re-appointed. The US Government supported legislative and presidential elections through an Economic Support Fund grant to UNDP. These resources were used to finance the training of voting officials, national electoral observers, and the printing of election related materials. The successful implementation of these elections was an enormous logistical challenge, in a country twice the size of France, with few financial resources and a weak infrastructure. The total cost of these elections is estimated at over \$10 million, of which approximately 70% was donor funded. The benefits of these elections, marking Niger’s continued commitment to democracy, peace and stability will be felt for generations to come. —

**Jennifer Petterson, Niamey.**

## Workshop to Enhance Mali’s Red Meat Export Capabilities

*Identifying opportunities to make Malian beef more competitive in the subregion*

**BAMAKO, Mali** — Seven million head of cattle and fifteen million head of sheep and goats provide Mali with one of West Africa’s largest domestic animal resource bases. This constitutes an important comparative advantage in the development of competitive supply chains for the production, marketing and sale of animal-based products for both domestic and export markets. Developing Mali’s capacity to export red meat has been widely discussed and the subject of numerous donor studies for more than a decade. Presently, USAID-Mali, through its export trade project, TradeMali, is as-

sembling partners and initiating a practical and pragmatic action plan that could make the export of Malian beef a reality in the near future.

Due to recent developments, particularly private investments in meat processing and logistical infrastructure, and the creation of a new livestock ministry committed to establishing a regulatory environment that will both promote and secure market share for animal-based product exports, USAID considered it opportune to organize a partners’ planning workshop. The objective of the workshop,

which took place during the last week of November, 2004, was to identify opportunities to make Malian beef more competitive in West and North African markets. Intense and animated discussions over a period of two days resulted in agreement on an 18-month strategic action plan intended to provide both a regulatory and marketing framework for enhancing the competitiveness of Malian beef and providing operational guidelines for positioning Malian beef in regional export markets. — **Harvey Shartup, TradeMali**



*“Mali will stay the course for local governance”, said ATT.*



Photo: Sana/USAID

technical assistance and training to some 250 local governments throughout the country.

The ceremony was presided over by President Amadou Toumani Touré. Other attendees included the Prime Minister, cabinet members, and members of local communities, the Speaker of the National Assembly and the President of the High Council of Communities, and all 703 elected mayors from the country's rural and urban local governments.

In his speech, President A.T.T. assured the mayors that “Mali will stay the course for local governance”. He also commended the enthusiasm and support of the citizenry for their locally elected officials and for grassroots democracy as a political system. Finally, he promised Malian government grants of over \$25 million to local communities over the next three years.

11,000 locally elected officials from Mali's 703 local communities. The organization envisions serving as a legitimate advocate for the effective implementation of the decentralization policy, and promotion of dialogue between local governments and the central government.

USAID/Mali was among the very first donors which provided financial assistance to A.M.M to organize its maiden National Commune Day in 2000. Under its former Democratic Governance Strategic Objective (1996-2002), USAID funded a million dollar, nationwide capacity development program for A.M.M. and its regional offices. A.M.M. is also among the organizations targeted by USAID/Mali's current ten-year program (2003-2012) of "Shared Governance through Decentralization" which provides

The A.M.M. President, for his part, stressed the numerous expectations from local government entities and their limited resources. In order to address that challenge, he urged the highest authorities of the country to pay special attention to the needs of the communities.

He concluded: "Mali's overall economic expansion will clearly grow from development at the community level."

USAID/Mali, through its democratic governance strategy, is a key contributor to achieving Malian government development objectives. — *S. Sidibé, USAID.*

*We welcome your comments and suggestions to improve BAM.*

**USAID/Mali**

*“Reducing poverty and accelerating economic growth through partnerships.”*

### Team Leaders

**Ann Hirschey, Health**  
**Jo Allen Lesser, Education**  
**Hannah Baldwin, Democratic Governance**  
**Dennis McCarthy, Accelerated Economic Growth**  
**Dennis Bilodeau, Communications for Development**

**B.P. 34, Bamako, Republic of Mali, West Africa. Tel: (223) 222-3602 Fax: (223) 222-3933**

To learn more about who we are and what we do visit our website: <http://www.usaidmali.org>